

## **Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

### **June 8, 2009**

**Members:** Darian Unger, Kathy Stevens, Victor Weissberg, Lucinda Lessley, Phil Olivetti, Mark Woodard, Marilyn Seitz, Mitch Warren, Tiffany Graham-Golden, Megan Moriarty, Casey Anderson and Constance Wynn

**Members Absent:** Alan Bowser, Deborah Linn, Evan Glass

**Guests:** Jennifer Nettles, Bob Colvin, Steve Silverman, Jennifer Desco, Jason Tomassini, Andy Wexler, Debbie Spielberg, Allan Mulligan, John Fausti, Barbara Ditzler, Jane Gorbaty, Ben Stutz, Bruce Johnston, Amy Wilson, Don Scheuerman, Angela Dizelos, Bruce Altevogt

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Darian Unger called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion** (Weissberg, Stevens), The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board unanimously approved the May 2009 minutes.

#### **Community Comments:**

Bob Colvin commented that they had Shredding Day in Silver Spring two Saturdays ago and it was a successful event and East Silver Spring had pens and a free oil change giveaway. There was an article in the Post about East Silver Spring that I thought would concentrate on Fenton Street but it was on Silver Spring and mentioned the purple line.

#### **CIP Forum**

Darian Unger introduced the County representatives that would discuss the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Angela Dizelos commented thank you all for having us here. Darian hit on many of the highlights and because we want to hear from you all I will make my commentary brief. (*see informational materials*)

- There are priorities critical to the County Executive and Silver Spring is one of the top priority areas for this upcoming CIP. Important to us are the Silver Spring Library, Transit Center and we are looking in our fiscal planning to see those projects through.
- Setting priorities and hearing what this Board and community have to say is important to us and Council. We need to received something in writing by July 15 to discuss with the at a meeting with the County Executive on August 4th

#### **Discussion**

Members of the Citizens Advisory Board requested clarification and information on the following projects:

- Civic Building
- Sligo Creek Golf Course

- Transit Center
- Library
- Dale Drive
- Fillmore Project
- Re-use Police Station
- Metropolitan Branch Trail

### **Economic Development**

Steve Silverman commented good to see all and I appreciate the opportunity to serve the County. I have been on the job for 48 days and I am trying to talk with folks and receive feedback.

- I would like to discuss more about the Fillmore but cannot except that we continue negotiations with the Lee Development Group.
- The deal with Live Nation is complete and the issue is the agreement between the County and Lee Development Group and fair to say this is the most complicated transaction in the history of Montgomery County.
- What happens if this is all approved through project plan, which is the first submittal, and site plan where they get into the detail. The Lee's don't have a project on the table that they are going to be proposing in the next year. They are moving forward through this process with the County to minimize the risk of what might happen down the line. Let's say they are approved for a site plan for a hotel, an office and eight years from now, they come in to the Planning Board with a hotel, and an office and they submit a plan and the then Planning Board say they don't like it. The way the process works is we the County Government have no ability to bind the planning board. All of this is to try and figure out what happens at three different points in the process with the last one potentially being year's way and what happens if the planning board makes a decision that makes the Lee's project not viable. It's either that simpler or complicated.
- That is what is taking so long. We are in continual discussions with them looking at different options and looking at different scenarios I know from talking to the County Executive that he wants to wrap this up very soon and by very soon I mean this summer so that we can move forward.
- There is also been a couple of bites at the apple in the State Legislature to make sure those monies stay in and stay on track but I can assure you like most people I assumed there was going to be a groundbreaking for Live Nation at some point and was surprised to learn how complicated this situation is.
- That's where we are with Fillmore. I can't get into specific details except for the County, the Lee's are interested in moving this project forward, and we are trying to figure out every possible contingency knowing that of course you can't.

### **Discussion**

- Kathy Stevens commented that the County Executive wants this wrapped up soon and I believe it's what the community wants. You stated that you know what you read in the newspaper, the community knows what they read then we have this incredible canyon in between what the community was told the last time there was something affirmative coming from the County and then no communication. I'm less concerned with the details and more concerned with the County's plan to not discuss we're in negotiations is only going to hold for so long. Those of us who are involved in the conversations

and hear more than the average citizen that says we're getting a music center. I would hope there is an end or interim point to have an honest dialogue.

- Steve Silverman responded there is not an interim point. It is literally a bunch of people going through paragraphs and different situations. I am optimistic that we will be able to wrap this up by the end of the summer. It has been a challenge not because of the County, the Lee's or the Planning Board. The biggest challenge is projecting what scenario could occur eight years from now that would make the Lee's project unviable and therefore the County would have gotten the music venue without the actual project.
- Phil Olivetti commented it is my understanding that the lease calls for the project, the Fillmore or Live Nation to be in there by July 1, 2010. If indeed my analysis is correct and its not done by July 2010 does it mean the entire lease is in the air and you have to renegotiate with Live Nation.
- Steve Silverman responded we have been working closely with Live Nation and they understand what is going on. If we can reach an agreement with Lee Development Group than I think everything will fall into place.
- Mitch Warren commented on the issue of the Lee's you mentioned eight years down the road. Eight years is a long time I know there is some concern about the history and the Lee's not moving quickly to develop the property has the County taken to those discussions.
- Steve Silverman responded that is not the issue. The issue is that we reach an agreement with the Lee's Live Nation building what we built they will open. Its 15 years that the extension is good for the approval is good for with this as the amenity tied into their project. It does not matter whether they redevelop in 2, 5, 8 or 15 years. What matters is what the Planning Board does at that time.
- Steve Silverman commented we're putting together an inter-agency working group with Department of Economic Development, the Department of General Services, Department of Housing and Community Affairs and other agencies to look at redevelopment and revitalization issues relating to a variety of places in the County. Part of what the County Executive wants to do is move forward with Wheaton revitalization but many of the issues relating to small businesses in Wheaton are exactly the same issues that small businesses in Silver Spring have. We're putting together round table discussion inviting small business reps that have opened businesses in Silver Spring for the past two years for the purpose to understand what impediments or challenges they have faced in dealing with Montgomery County in opening up and creating a successful business. This is not going to address a small business that's in Fenton Village that has been there 25 years and in this economy having challenges that have not been anticipated. They are trying to do stuff at the federal level we're trying to identify what we can do at the local level. Nobody is talking about reducing safety or health related issues. It's just simply a matter of saying if you have the resources in this down economy to open a business in Downtown Silver Spring or Wheaton we would like to know what you think the impediments are going to be. The best way we can do that is to talk to people that has gone through this in the last year or two.
- Steve Silverman said I know there is a local first initiative in Silver Spring and Wheaton. I'm meeting LEDC to understand what they have been doing in the past year and what the plans are for this year since that is a contract that comes under our shop. I'm happy to get any input or thoughts that you have about either of these issues.

- Darian Unger responded we have advocated for Local First and I would be happy to share that with you we were enthusiastic about that.
- Steve Silverman commented we need to know if it's working. I'm going to details on what has been going on. We get to help write the parameters of what they are going to be doing so any thoughts or suggestions are welcome.
- Phil Olivetti asked what is the County Executive's policy on the ring of commercial districts around the CBD for instance Four Corner's, Montgomery Hills what is the plan.
- Steve Silverman responded if you are asking about enhancing those areas it is not at the top compared to Wheaton, Long Branch and Burtonsville which are targeted areas for revitalization in the County. There are master plans for these areas, improvements, streetscaping all kinds of improvements that go on in these communities.
- Darian Unger asked in this inter-agency group that have one of the issues we have been working on is parking, how pedestrian traffic can help businesses and improving pedestrian linkages. DOT seems to be absent from that but Transportation seems to play a strong part.
- Steve Silverman responded they are in our group I did not list all the other agencies such as the Libraries, DOT, County Attorney's, OMB. The key drivers from a revitalization stand point are DED, the Department of General Services because that is where the planning department is located and the Department of Housing and Community Affairs because of the housing and also there involvement in community. Those are three lead agencies.
- Casey Anderson asked if the County Executive is on the same page with Park & Planning on development as it relates to economic development meaning land use and transportation. I'm thinking of Royce Hanson's speech to the Montgomery County Civic Federation last December talking about White Flint and what the planning board is doing there as a model for new urbanism as opposed to suburban model.
- Steve Silverman responded it's fair to say the County Executive supports the planning board is going in connection with the White Flint plan, which is transit oriented development.
- Megan Moriarty commented I work for Impact Silver Spring. We have been working with HHS and other county agencies and done a lot of door knocking and community meetings and what we're running into is that people can't find jobs. Our meetings are called Neighbors Exchanges and we bring in resource partners. We have Hugh Bailey from Montgomery Works working with us but the questions people are asking he doesn't have many good answers for. A large population in our community is looking for jobs through Montgomery Works but it is not really serving their needs. There seems to be no real good link to available jobs. Some people are hiring, landscape businesses are picking up again and lifeguards but it seems no one is making a connection between people that are looking for jobs and the available jobs. Is that something your department is going to deal with?
- Steve Silverman responded yes absolutely. One of the pieces of our department is workforce investment funds from the federal government. We are in the process of reviewing how we are handling the one-stop shop in Wheaton and the other is in Lake Forest Mall in Gaithersburg. We are trying to figure out how we can link the people who come through the one-stop shop to available jobs. I been to three economic

briefings in the last ten days all of which say the same thing, the only real jobs that are being created are in the field of education, government and healthcare. If you have a background in retail or construction the amount of jobs that are available are limited. The second thing is we are looking at training dollars coming out of the feds to try to see to what extent folks can be trained but again all the training dollars in the world are worthless unless people are being trained to go into the fields where there is hiring.

- Darian Unger commented there are many hot button items whether its development in Fenton Village or what could happen in the Ripley District on the other side of Georgia Avenue. As these things, come up community input could be helpful.
- Steve Silverman commented that he can be contacted at [steve.silverman@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:steve.silverman@montgomerycountymd.gov). We are going to be working closely with the Silver Spring Regional Center to get feedback so that we know what is going on. I welcome anybody in the community to send an email with questions or comments. It is a very tough time and we want to make sure we do everything we can as a department and working with other agencies to retain the jobs and the businesses we had. To make sure we're doing that we need to know about it.

### **New Business**

Marilyn Seitz, chair of the Nominations Committee announced the appointed positions:

- **Darian Unger**, *Chair*
- **Mark Woodard**, *Executive Vice Chair*
- **Casey Anderson**, *Parliamentary Vice Chair*
- **Constance Wynn**, *Secretary*
- Marilyn Seitz thanked the Nominations Committee for their help. The new nominations take office in September.
- Can we please get an updated SSCAB contact list on bright colored paper?

**Motion** (Stevens) The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board unanimously approved the new nominations.

### **Transportation and Pedestrian Safety**

Darian Unger reported:

- Please refer to page 22 of the June 8, 2009 packet for Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Committee notes from May 27 meeting.

**Motion** (Anderson), The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board unanimously approved the letter advocating a speed limit reduction on Piney Branch Road. (*see informational materials for finalized letter*)

### **Commercial Economic Development**

Phil Olivetti reported:

- The notes from the CED May 20, 2009 meeting are on page 26 of the packet.
- The next meeting is on June 17, 2009 at the Silver Spring Regional Center.

### **Director's Report**

The Director's report is included in the informational material.

**8:55 p.m. Meeting Adjourned**

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